



## **DIOCESAN CANONICAL INSPECTION**

### **THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL, COLLECTIVE WORSHIP AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

<b>School:</b>	St Mary's Catholic Primary School
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<b>School URN:</b>	106123
<b>Headteacher:</b>	Mrs Fionuala Boucher
<b>Chair of Governors:</b>	Dr Nick O'Brien
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	10 December 2014
<b>Inspectors:</b>	Mr Peter Giorgio Mrs Anne Recchia
<b>Overall Effectiveness:</b>	1
<b>Date of Previous Inspection:</b>	30 March 2009
<b>Overall Effectiveness:</b>	1

## **INTRODUCTION**

The inspection of this school was carried out on behalf of the Bishop of Nottingham under Canon 806 of Canon Law in accordance with the Evaluation Schedule for diocesan canonical inspections in the Diocese of Nottingham. The inspection reviews and evaluates how effective the school is in providing Catholic education. The process begins with the school's own self-evaluation and the inspection schedule is in line with the criteria set by the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers (NBRIA).

During the inspection, the inspectors observed 8 Religious Education lessons and 1 Act of Collective Worship.

Meetings were held with the headteacher, the subject leaders for Religious Education, a governor and the parish priest. Discussions were also held with pupils and parents.

The inspectors scrutinised a range of documents including the school's development plan, self-evaluation evidence and minutes from governing body meetings. Inspectors also examined the work in pupils' Religious Education books.

## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

- St Mary's is an average sized primary school. Due to its geographical position, it serves the communities of two dioceses - the parish of St Mary's Marple Bridge in the Diocese of Nottingham and the parish of the Holy Spirit, Marple in the Diocese of Shrewsbury. The majority of pupils transfer to Harrytown Catholic High School which is in the Diocese of Shrewsbury.
- 87% of pupils are baptised Catholics.
- 7% of pupils are entitled to or have received free school meals and are in receipt of pupil premium funding.
- 3% of pupils are identified within an ethnic minority group; 2% of pupils' first language is not English.
- The school Nursery is an integral part of the school; the 40-place Nursery is the Local Authority school provision for the area of Marple Bridge, although the catchment draws from a wider area in keeping with the school population.

## INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

**OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS**

**1**

**CATHOLIC LIFE**

**1**

**COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

**1**

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

**2**

### KEY FINDINGS

- St Mary's is an outstanding Catholic school.
- The school's Catholic Life is outstanding. St Mary's is a vibrant Catholic community where the Catholic Life is a tangible and intrinsic feature at all levels. Pupils are rightly proud to belong to St Mary's and are excellent ambassadors for all aspects of the school's work.
- Collective Worship is outstanding. St Mary's is a deeply prayerful and spiritual community; pupils' response to and participation in Collective Worship is outstanding as a result of school leaders' deep commitment to this aspect of school life. Pupils respond with enormous enthusiasm and joy to Acts of Collective Worship both as a whole-school community and within their classes.
- Religious Education is good. Pupils at St Mary's enjoy Religious Education and are able to explain how it impacts on their lives at a level appropriate to their age and ability. They generally concentrate well in lessons, are motivated to do their best and are rarely off task. Their behaviour for learning is good as they respond well to the excellent role models provided by the class teachers and support staff and the warm, positive relationships within the classroom.

### WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- To accelerate the rate of pupils' progress in Religious Education further by making more effective use of pupils' assessment data and their prior learning so that all groups of pupils are provided with work which is sufficiently challenging.

## CATHOLIC LIFE

### THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

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- The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.
- The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

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The Catholic Life of St Mary's School is outstanding.

St Mary's is a vibrant Catholic community where the Catholic Life is a tangible and intrinsic feature at all levels. Pupils are rightly proud to belong to St Mary's and are excellent ambassadors for all aspects of the school's work. They speak with tremendous passion about the distinctiveness of their school and the great sense of belonging which exists within it, 'our school is special as God looks upon us'. It is clear that pupils are fully involved in both shaping and developing the Catholic Life of the school which they achieve with enormous success. Pupils are alert to and respond willingly to the needs of others through their work to support numerous national and local charities. As a legacy from the Year of Faith, each class is assigned a particular charity to support for the school year. This also involves finding out more about the charity's work and feeding this back to the whole school community throughout the year. The behaviour of pupils is exemplary at all times; the school's behaviour policy is firmly rooted in the Catholic faith using the words of Jesus, 'love one another as I have loved you' as its basis. Pupils take on positions of responsibility and leadership within the school with willingness and eagerness. The range of opportunities offered to them is vast and include form captains, school council representatives, 'special friend' buddies, Fairtrade, greenforce, book detectives, business gang and the helping hands group. In addition to these, the prayer group also meets regularly and is involved in a range of activities which develop both the Catholic Life of the school and Collective Worship. This group recently decided to establish 'prayer stops' throughout the school. Despite the school's geographical position within the Diocese of Nottingham, it is fully involved in all diocesan events.

The provision for the Catholic Life of the school is given the highest possible priority by all staff and the local parish priest. The school's recently reviewed vision and mission statement encapsulates the Catholic philosophy of education perfectly. It is clear that this is a lived reality through the excellent quality of relationships evident within the school which are founded on Gospel values and mutual respect. As a result, morale is extremely high; staff work together as a cohesive team and are supported well by the school's senior leaders. Links with the local parishes are good; the parish priest is a welcome and regular visitor to the school. Pastoral provision for pupils is outstanding and it is clear that they value the hard work and dedication of all of the staff in helping to ensure that they are safe and well-cared for at all times. The teaching programme for RSE (Relationships and Sex Education) is in keeping with the teachings of the Catholic Church. The school's Catholic character is very effectively reflected through tasteful artefacts and displays; many of which contain thought-provoking and profound examples of pupils' work.

The school's dedicated and inspirational headteacher articulates and communicates the educational mission of the Church both through word and example; she is well supported by other senior leaders including the subject leaders for Religious Education. The Catholic Life of the school is monitored by all stakeholders. The school's self-evaluation is accurate, incisive and regular; it is also clearly at the forefront of the annual school development plan. Parents are extremely supportive of the school. Evidence from recent questionnaires and further evidence gathered on the day of inspection indicates that the school's Catholic Life is given 'central priority'. Governors make a highly significant contribution to the life of the school, they are knowledgeable and show an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further development. This is due to regular visits to the school and comprehensive reports from the headteacher which detail the school's journey towards the completion of targets set in the development plan. The '3 year strategy' provides a meaningful context for meetings and discussions; it also enables governors to challenge and support the school's leadership team in an effective and rigorous way.

## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

### THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

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- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship. 

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- The quality of provision for Collective Worship. 

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- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship. 

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Collective Worship is outstanding.

St Mary's is a deeply prayerful and spiritual community; pupils' response to and participation in Collective Worship is outstanding as a result of school leaders' deep commitment to this aspect of school life. Pupils respond with enormous enthusiasm and joy to Acts of Collective Worship both as a whole-school community and within their classes. They are able to engage in periods of stillness and silence with great reverence and respect. It is clear that since the school's last inspection, great attention has been given to the development of pupil-led worship. Staff have worked tirelessly to ensure that pupils, from the earliest age take the initiative in leading the community life of prayer and worship. They are creative and resourceful in their planning of liturgy and are keen to ensure that it is of the highest quality. Pupils demonstrate an excellent understanding of the Church's seasons which is appropriate to their age and level of understanding. As a result of this, the impact of Collective Worship on pupils' spiritual and moral development is outstanding.

Collective Worship is a central part of everyday life at St Mary's and is given the highest possible priority by school leaders. Praying together is part of the school day for all staff and pupils. A clear policy is in place for Collective Worship which includes a range of rich and varied liturgical experiences for all pupils. The celebration of the Eucharist as a whole-school community is a highlight for each term and in addition to this, pupils are also given the opportunity to celebrate Mass as a class and to attend Mass in the local parish. Parents are invited to all liturgical celebrations and are encouraged to share in their children's faith

journey through initiatives such as the ‘travelling cribs’ during Advent and the weekly ‘Wednesday Word’ publication. The staff at St Mary’s are highly skilled in helping pupils to plan and deliver worship and are clearly passionate about ensuring that pupils have high quality experiences of the Church’s liturgical life. The Act of Worship observed on the day of the school’s inspection was an excellent example of staff enabling and empowering pupils to take on both the planning and leadership of worship. Liturgy boxes in each classroom provide a variety of ideas and artefacts to stimulate the preparation of and participation in Collective Worship at a class level.

Leaders and managers demonstrate an excellent understanding of the Church’s liturgical year and how to plan and deliver high quality Acts of Collective Worship. This knowledge is then effectively disseminated to staff through regular training opportunities. Frequent and robust monitoring and evaluation procedures are in place for Collective Worship. These processes include asking for written evaluations from a range of stakeholders including parents, governors and pupils themselves. Governors receive detailed information in the form of the headteacher’s termly report. The findings from these evaluations are then used in a systematic way in order to continue to develop this outstanding practice further.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

### **THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

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- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.
- The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.
- How well leaders and managers (including governors) monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

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Religious Education is good.

Pupils at St Mary’s enjoy Religious Education and are able to explain how it impacts on their lives at a level appropriate to their age and ability. They generally concentrate well in lessons, are motivated to do their best and are rarely off task. Their behaviour for learning is good as they respond well to the excellent role models provided by class teachers and support staff and the warm, positive relationships within the classroom. Pupils make good progress throughout the school. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, given their low starting point on entry, pupils quickly acquire knowledge and understanding and use appropriate religious language in their discussions and play. By the end of this stage, the majority of pupils are at an age-appropriate level in Religious Education. In Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils respond well to questioning, are beginning to interpret sources through a variety of ways and reflect on their meaning. They apply religious skills, knowledge and understanding across the curriculum and can integrate these into their lives. One child reported ‘Religious Education allows us to spread our personality in a religious way’. Progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 is generally good. There are some inconsistencies however within individual cohorts currently within school, where progress is not as rapid. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 and 2 is consistently above diocesan averages over a number of years.

Teaching at St. Mary's is good with some examples of outstanding practice. As a consequence, most pupils make good progress over time, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Teachers generally have good subject knowledge and apply this to their teaching. They use a range of resources and teaching strategies, including the creative use of cross-curricular links to engage pupils and promote learning. In some lessons, the quality of questioning and discussion very effectively challenges all groups of pupils, tasks are well differentiated to respond to the ability and interests of the pupils and pupils clearly understand their objective and the steps needed to achieve it. Pupils are active and engaged in these lessons, learning from the teacher, support staff and each other and therefore make very good progress. In some lessons however, where pupils are less actively involved in their learning, differentiated questioning and tasks do not always effectively challenge all groups and individuals. Pupils' responses are not always tested with further questioning to assess the level of understanding and, as a result, a small minority of pupils struggle to understand the tasks set and the steps required to achieve the lesson objective, which hampers their rapid progress.

Teachers have a good understanding of the *Levels of Attainment in Religious Education* and over time, have become confident in the use of these to assess pupils' work and to set targets. They use driver words effectively in lessons to ensure that most pupils understand the objective and know how to achieve it. Marking and constructive feedback is given regularly so that pupils know how well they have done and what they need to do next to improve their work. Pupils often respond to this with comments and say it gives them greater confidence to make improvements.

Subject leaders, the headteacher and governors conduct a range of systematic monitoring and evaluation activities which give them a clear and accurate picture of provision and outcomes in Religious Education. The analysis of this provides a firm basis for identifying strengths and areas for development and has resulted in pupils' outcomes in Religious Education and teaching being at least good across the school. Through regular engagement with diocesan training, leaders and managers are well informed about current developments in Religious Education. They in turn are able to support and improve teaching and learning through well-targeted continuing professional development opportunities for staff. This has ensured that teachers use the *Come and See* programme effectively and have growing confidence in assessing pupils' work. Where there are small inconsistencies, these have been identified and are being addressed methodically. Good leadership has ensured that Religious Education has a prominent position in the school curriculum and has a positive impact on the spiritual and moral development of all pupils. It compares favourably with other core subjects in terms of staffing, resources, curriculum time and expertise. Good links are made with the parish and the wider Catholic community to give pupils first-hand experience of liturgical life. Visitors from other local religious and belief communities further enrich the curriculum. The subject leaders for Religious Education are an inspiration to staff through their enthusiasm and commitment to the subject. There is a common purpose and resolve to improve implicit in their work. Governors have committed time and financial resources to ensure succession planning is in place and that the subject is led effectively despite staffing changes.

## WHAT INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS MEAN

Within the report, the following grades are used:

<b>Grade 1</b>	Outstanding
<b>Grade 2</b>	Good
<b>Grade 3</b>	Requires Improvement
<b>Grade 4</b>	Inadequate

In the context of the whole school, the overall effectiveness grades have the following meaning:

<b>Grade 1</b>	Outstanding	The school is a highly effective Catholic school. Pupils' needs are exceptionally well met.
<b>Grade 2</b>	Good	The school is an effective Catholic school. Pupils' needs are met well.
<b>Grade 3</b>	Requires Improvement	The school is not yet a good Catholic school, it is not inadequate however, there are aspects that require improvement. There will be a monitoring visit within the next 12 months and the school will be re-inspected within 3 years.
<b>Grade 4</b>	Inadequate	There are features in need of urgent and immediate attention. The school is not meeting the basic minimum requirement for adequacy as a Catholic school. The school will receive an annual monitoring visit and will be re-inspected within 3 years.